

United States Senate

September 23, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

I am in receipt of your letter dated September 22, 2009 in which you discuss the importance of legislation that would permit the safe importation of lower-cost prescription drugs and I appreciate your stated commitment to have legislation considered as a stand-alone proposal on the Senate floor. However, I believe that it is not only important to consider this legislation but to do so in an expedited fashion.

The fact is that countless Americans will immediately benefit through increased access to lower-cost, safely imported prescription drugs if S.1232, the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act, becomes law. Further, as you know, CBO has said that consumers would save up to \$50 billion over the next ten years under this legislation. We should put politics aside and make the needs of Americans a priority. We cannot wait a day longer to provide relief to Americans that are finding it increasingly difficult to afford necessary medications.

During the floor consideration of the FDA Tobacco bill in early June, Senators Dorgan and I, along with several others, sought to offer the Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act as an amendment to the bill providing FDA with authority to regulate tobacco. Unfortunately, special interests and lobbyists representing the major drug companies were able to stall consideration of this important legislation. At that time, you made a commitment to bring drug importation legislation to the Senate floor if we were willing to allow the tobacco legislation to move forward without consideration of the importation legislation. After several months of inaction, two weeks ago you once again personally committed to bringing importation legislation to the floor in "the next several days." We now understand that once again, this timeline is slipping and you now "guarantee" you will move to proceed to S.1232 before the end of the year if the issue is not considered during the full Senate's consideration of comprehensive health reform.

Americans deserve the full Senate's consideration of this legislation, not by the end of the year or at some time in comprehensive health reform, but now. In the time that floor action on this

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legislation has been postponed, prescription drug prices in the US have continued to increase. It is unconscionable and irresponsible that this legislation would be further delayed. To insure Americans can benefit from safe, lower-cost imported prescription drugs, I reserve the right to bring up the legislation as an amendment during consideration of any measure that comes before the Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John", with a stylized, flowing script.

John McCain